**Get in touch**
If any of our pictures bring back memories for you, let us know by emailing james.milner@reachplc.com

Flooding at Thetford in 1919

## County hit by major floods – 1919

NOT for many years has the county of Cambridgeshire been visited by floods of such magnitude or of so serious a nature as those experienced within the last ten days.

Thousands of acres are under water and, at Cambridge, the water rose at one time to within six inches of the height reached by the memorable flood of 1879.

At Ely, the river touched a depth beyond any previously attained within the memory of the oldest inhabitants. It is good news to hear that since Sunday the water has been steadily falling.

A serious break in the riverbank, midway between Waterbeach and Upware last Wednesday, resulted in the disastrous flooding of hundreds of acres of low-lying land in the vicinity, the temporary isolation of several farms and cottages and considerable damage to stacks.

On Tuesday night, above the banks at Waterbeach Fen where the break in the river bank occurred, and farmers took prompt steps to remove their stock to safety, but on Wednesday morning a break occurred, and the breach rapidly becoming wider, the water poured through.

Farm buildings and cottages were surrounded, and the inhabitants in some cases were forced to seek shelter in the village.

All Wednesday, farm workers and other helpers from Waterbeach and district worked up to their knees in water, but the gap widened, and it was found necessary to sink two barges in the breach. Thousands of sandbags were requisitioned and, by this means, the hole was filled and the inflow of water at this spot checked.

Men have been employed night and day in "cradging" along the banks and strengthening the places where any water was found overflowing, this also being done on the Stretham bank of the Old West.

## Woman summoned over use of barn – 1930

A WOMAN was summoned for allowing a barn at Fen Ditton to be used for immoral purposes. She had converted it into a dance hall, teas were advertised and dances held.

Det Sgt Willis said he looked through the window and observed people inside. Some of the women attending were known to be of an undesirable character and the men mostly members of the university.

The girls were dancing by themselves down the centre of the room, holding up their dresses; another girl got on top of the piano and danced. Couples frequently left and went to a nearby cottage.

Later, the university proctor arrived; he went to the dance room which was in darkness and by the light of his lamp could see four undergraduates and seven girls.

They said they were telling ghost stories.

## University's breakthrough for agriculture – 1927

LORD Bledisloe said there was knowledge emanating from Cambridge University which was of unparalleled benefit to agriculture and was unequalled in any part of the civilised world.

This was a district of very good land – when it was not under water (laughter) – and of good farmers who were on the road to bankruptcy.

They were passing through the most critical period the industry had to face since the depressing times of the 1890s, but the knowledgeable farmer could keep his head above water and be proud of doing it.

## Call to move 72-year-old from hovel – 1897

THE clerk to the Ely Guardians applied for the removal of Tabitha Camm, an eccentric old woman aged 72 years who is living in a tumbled-down old hovel in Littleport fen.

The place was filthy in the extreme. She has lived there all her life and she tenaciously sticks to it.

PC King said the walls were tumbling down and the bricks had no mortar between them. The rain penetrated and soot and dirt covered the place.

The lady is independent in every sense of the word and would-be sympathisers are quickly ordered to decamp.

## Keep up to date with the past

- Read Mike Petty's Cambridgeshire Scrapbook to search for other stories.
- Join Fenland History on Facebook to share your photos and information.
- Follow James Milner on Twitter to receive regular updates each weekend.
- Take a trip down Memory Lane to search for, share and colourise photos.
- Subscribe to Mike Petty's YouTube channel to listen to some of this talks.

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